

Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A material spreader for spreading a quantity of material comprising:

a material spreader box having a bottom wall and opposite side walls forming a storage chamber for storing the quantity of material;

the bottom wall having a front end, rear end, and opposite side edges from which the opposite side walls extend upwardly;

a discharge opening in the material spreader box adjacent the rear end of the bottom wall;

a conveyor belt superimposed over the bottom wall and positioned for supporting the quantity of material contained within the storage chamber, the conveyor belt having a width and that causes the conveyor belt to substantially completely cover the width of the bottom wall;

a barrier connected to the conveyor belt;

drive mechanism connected to the conveyor belt for moving the conveyor belt and the barrier relative to the bottom wall in a rearward direction toward the rear end of the bottom wall ~~of the spreader box~~, whereby the conveyor belt and the barrier will together carry the quantity of material within the storage chamber in a rearward direction and will discharge the material through the discharge opening at the rear end of the bottom wall;

a beater assembly mounted to the rear of the box for engaging and spreading the material exiting from the discharge opening of the rear wall.

Claim 2 (Original): The material spreader according to claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism comprises a chain and sprocket assembly connected to the conveyor belt.

Claim 3 (Original): The material spreader according to claim 2 wherein the chain and sprocket assembly is located outside the storage chamber and is free from contact with the quantity of material stored within the storage chamber.

Claim 4 (Original): The material spreader according to claim 1 wherein the beater assembly comprises a plurality of beater bars mounted to the spreader box for rotation about a plurality of upstanding axes.

Claim 5 (Original): The material spreader according to claim 1 wherein the beater assembly comprises a plurality of beater bars mounted to the spreader box for rotation about a plurality of horizontal axes.

Claim 6 (Currently amended): The material spreader according to claim 2 ~~and further comprising a first roller and a second wherein the chain and sprocket assembly comprises a sprocket and a roller spaced apart from one another and mounted for rotation about first and second roller axes, respectively, the conveyor belt being continuous and being trained around at least one of the first and second rollers.~~

Claim 7 (Currently amended): The material spreader according to claim 6 wherein the chain and sprocket assembly comprises ~~a sprocket connected to at least one of the first and second rollers and a chain engaging the sprocket for causing rotation thereof of the one of the first and second rollers.~~

Claim 8 (Currently amended): The material spreader according to claim 7 wherein the ~~chain and the sprocket are~~ is located outside the material storage chamber.

Claim 9 (Currently amended): A method for spreading a quantity of material comprising:
taking a spreader box having opposite sidewalls and a rear discharge opening therein, and a
bottom wall forming a material chamber;
mounting a conveyor belt within the material chamber in close covering relation over the bottom
wall and substantially covering the width of the bottom wall;
attaching a barrier to the conveyor belt;
inserting the quantity of material within the material chamber between the barrier and the
conveyor belt so that the quantity of material rests upon the conveyor belt;
moving the conveyor belt and the barrier toward the discharge opening whereby the quantity of
material will be moved toward and discharged from the material chamber through the
discharge opening;
engaging and spreading the material being discharged from the discharge opening.

Claim 10 (Currently amended): The method of claim 9 wherein the step of moving the
conveyor belt comprises using a movable chain and sprocket assembly connected to the conveyor
belt and the barrier to move the conveyor belt and the barrier toward the discharge opening.

Claim 11 (Currently amended): The method of claim 10 and further comprising
maintaining the chain and sprocket assembly ~~outside the material chamber~~ away from the

material on the conveyor belt so that the chain and sprocket assembly does not engage the quantity of material.

Claims 12-13 (Cancelled)

Claim 14 (Currently amended): The method of claim ~~13~~11 and further comprising using a chain trained around a sprocket ~~connected to the at least one roller to rotate the at least one roller~~
mounted for rotation on the spreader box.

Claim 15 (Currently amended): A method for spreading a quantity of material comprising:
taking a spreader box having a pair of opposite side walls and a bottom wall forming a material chamber, the bottom wall having front and rear ends, the spreader box having a discharge opening located adjacent the rear end of the bottom wall;
training a continuous belt/chain assembly around a chain sprocket and a belt roller, the belt/chain assembly comprising a belt located within the material chamber in close covering relation over the bottom wall and substantially covering the width of the bottom wall, ~~and a chain~~
a barrier connected to the belt, and an elongated chain connected to the barrier and
connected to the belt;
inserting the quantity of material within the material chamber so that the quantity of material rests upon the conveyor belt;
moving the conveyor belt and the barrier toward the discharge opening whereby the quantity of material will be moved toward and discharged from the material chamber through the discharge opening;

engaging and spreading the material being discharged from the discharge opening; and
maintaining the chain free from contact with the material within the material chamber at all
times.